

Message Text

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ACTION CU-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 USIE-00 PA-03 PRS-01 INR-10

CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DRC-01 /036 W

----- 117196

R 02001 Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8248

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL

SUBJ: US. BICENTENNIAL: US.-MEXICO COMPARATIVE AND
SHARED-HISTORY PROJECT

REF: CA-3370 JULY 19, 1971

JOINT EMBASSY-USIS MESSAGE

1. THE EMBASSY IS TAKING THIS MEANS OF PROPOSING TO THE DEPARTMENT AND TO THE AGENCY A PROJECT THAT WOULD DEAL WITH THE SHARED AND COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES.

2. THE PROJECT WOULD, IN ESSENCE, BE A JOINT US.-MEXICAN EFFORT TO SHOW THE MUTUALITY OF THE INTERESTS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES FROM HISTORICAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POINTS OF VIEW. MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE MORE SHARED HISTORY THAN IS GENERALLY REALIZED AND MUCH MORE THAT THE LONG COMMON BORDER WOULD SUGGEST. THE PROJECT WOULD BE AN ATTEMPT TO FOCUS SCHOLARLY ATTENTION ON THE WHOLE GAMUT OF MUTUAL INTERESTS WITH EMPAHSIS ON THE PRESENT AND IMMEDIATE FUTURE. IT WOULD REQUIRE A PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS OF CAREFULLY SELECTED MATERIALS TO BE ADDED TO THE HOLDINGS OF THE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN LIBRARY.

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3. THE LIBRARY ALREADY ENJOYS AND EXCELLENT REPUTATION AND

THE POST BELIEVES THAT WITH THE ADDITION OF WELL CHOSEN MATERIALS IT CAN BECOME A CENTER OF SERIOUS INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY FOR SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS INTERESTED IN US. AND MEXICAN AFFAIRS.

4. AT THE PRESENT TIME OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SERIOUS STUDY AND TEACHING OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND SOCIETY ARE AT BEST LIMITED IN MEXICO AND THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO SERIOUS SCHOLARSHIP THAT PRESENTS AMERICAN AFFAIRS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE EDUCATED MEXICAN. PARTLY BECAUSE OF THIS THERE IS A NOTABLE LACK OF INTEREST AMONG TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN A SCHOLARLY APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF THE UNITED STATES.

5. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THIS SITUATION MAY BE ABOUT TO CHANGE. A FEW MEXICAN SCHOLARS ARE INTERESTED IN JOINT APPROACHES TO US.-MEXICAN RELATIONS. THE EDITOR OF "SEPSETENTAS", PUBLICATIONS OF THE SECRETARIAT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR THE EDUCATED PUBLIC, HAS SHOWN AN INTEREST IN PUBLISHING A THREE-VOLUME STUDY OF THE COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO. /SEPSETENTAS" TITLES USUALLY HAVE PRINT RUNS OF 50,000 COPIES AND HAVE A WIDE READERSHIP.

6. A FEW MEXICAN HISTORIANS ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN WRITING ON SUBJECTS PERTINENT TO THE SHARED-HISTORY PROJECT AND THE POST BELIEVES THAT PUTTING CERTAIN HARD-TO-GET (FOR THEM) ITEMS IN THE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN LIBRARY WOULD GENERATE SOME NEEDED LOCAL SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT. MICROFILM ROLLS OF "DIPLOMATIC INSTRUCTIONS, MEXICO". AND "DIPLOMATIC DESPATCHES, MEXICO", AVAILABLE AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE ARE EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS THAT WOULD BE IMMEDIATELY USEFUL.

7. FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE AGENCY THE POST PROPOSES COLLECTIONS TO BE ACQUIRED AS FOLLOWS:

A. FOR INITIAL CONCENTRATION, TWO PERIODS OF COMPARABLE EXPERIENCE HAVE BEEN SELECTED:

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1. MEXICO AND THE US. IN THE ATLANTIC REVOLUTION (1775-1825)

2. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN THE US. AND MEXICO (1910-1940)

B. SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE TOPIC OF US.-MEXICAN RELATIONS HAS BEEN CHOSEN. FOR THE FIRST PHASE, THE EMPHASIS WOULD BE ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

8. IN THIS PRELIMINARY PRESENTATION THE POST HAS NOT PROVIDED ANY BREAK-DOWN OF COSTS THAT WOULD BE INVOLVED. IT WILL FIRST NEED TO LEARN WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE UNITED STATES AND COMPARE THAT INFORMATION WITH WHAT IS ACCESSIBLE IN MEXICO. THIS EXERCISE COULD WELL RESULT IN THE FORMATION OF A SPECIAL UNION CATALOGUE.

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9. THE POST WOULD SUGGEST THAT BOTH AN EMINENT HISTORIAN AND AN AGENCY OFFICER BASED IN WASHINGTON COME TO MEXICO CITY TO DISCUSS THE PROJECT IN ALL ITS DIMENSIONS. THE HISTORIAN WOULD BE ASKED TO STUDY THE PROJECT, TO CONSULT WITH MEXICAN SCHOLARS AND FINALLY TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING AND LAUNCHING THE PROJECT. THE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL HERE IN SUGGESTING WAYS IN WHICH AGENCY RESOURCES CAN BE UTILIZED FOR THE PROJECT AND IN WASHINGTON BY BEING THE POST'S INTERPRETER IN COURT.

10 THE INITIAL IDEA FOR THIS PROJECT IS DR. GEORGE BAKER'S, EXCHANGE PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO. THE PROJECT IS INITIALLY ADDRESSED TO ONE OF THE AIMS OF THE APPROACHING BICENTENNIAL OBSERVANCES WHICH READS (CA-3370 OF JULY 19, 1971):

" TO ENCOURAGE EXAMINATION OF THE IDEAS OF DEMOCRACY ROOTED IN THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT AND THEIR CONTINUING VALIDITY IN THE ALLEVIATION OF CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS."

11. THE POST UNDERSTANDS THAT RICHARD B. MORRIS HAS BEEN INFORMED OF THE PROJECT AND COULD COME TO MEXICO CITY FOR CONSULATION. WHILE HERE HE WOULD BE INVITED TO GIVE ONE OR MORE PUBLIC LECTURES.

12. THE POST REQUESTS COMMENTS FROM BOTH THE AGENCY AND UNCLASSIFIED

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THE DEPARTMENT.
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